

New Claims

New claims 108-164 have been added by this amendment. New claims 108-164 are of a slightly different scope than the previously pending claims. However, in view of the cited reference, new claims 108-164 are believed to be allowable, as provided below.

Boutaghou et al. (including corresponding U.S. Patent No. 6,125,099) is directed toward a disk drive having a disk with improved stiffness. The disk has an internal framework of ribs disposed within the disk. (Col. 4, lines 33-38; Col. 5, lines 1-3). The Patent Office has stated in its Final Rejection that "the outer ridged section has a top surface that is fully exposed (e.g., see COL. 7, lines 38-41) within the drive housing." The Applicants respectfully disagree with this statement. The cited language does not teach or suggest exposing the outer ridged section of a stiffener. In actuality, the cited language states that "the stiffening structure may be configured to expose a substantial portion of the recording layer track locations (for example, between the ribs of the framework)." Rather, Boutaghou et al. clearly teaches that the rib structure is internal, and is not exposed or disposed on the surface of the disk. Each of the embodiments described in Boutaghou et al. clearly provides that the rib structure is disposed within another layer or layers of the disk, and is not external or exposed in any manner. (Col. 7, lines 28-41; Figures 3a and 3b).

In contrast to the cited reference, new claim 108 is directed toward a disk drive that requires "a drive housing; and an asymmetrical storage disk that is rotatably coupled to the drive housing, the storage disk including a body region, a first side region that stores data and a second side region opposite the first side region, the body region being positioned between the side regions, the second side region including an exposed outer flat section and a raised stiffener that increases the rigidity of the storage disk, the stiffener extending at least approximately 0.001 millimeters away from the outer flat section." These features are not taught or suggested by Boutaghou et al. Thus claim 108 should be allowed. Because claims 109-126 depend from claim 108, these claims should also be allowed.

New claim 127 requires "a drive housing; and an asymmetrical storage disk that is rotatably coupled to the drive housing, the storage disk including a body region, a first

side region that stores data and a second side region opposite the first side region, the body region being positioned between the side regions, the second side region having an exposed second side surface including an outer flat section and an outer ridged section that extends at least approximately 0.001 millimeters above the outer flat section.” These features are not taught or suggested by Boutaghou et al. Thus claim 127 should be allowed. Because claims 128-145 depend from claim 127, these claims should also be allowed.

New claim 146 is directed toward a method of manufacturing a disk drive that requires the step of “rotatably coupling a storage disk to a drive housing, the storage disk having a body region, a first side region that stores data and a second side region opposite the first side region, the body region being positioned between the side regions, the second side region including an exposed outer flat section and a raised stiffener that increases the rigidity of the storage disk, the stiffener extending at least approximately 0.001 millimeters away from the outer flat section.” This step is not taught or suggested by Boutaghou et al. Thus claim 146 should be allowed. Because claims 147-155 depend from claim 146, these claims should also be allowed.

New claim 156 requires the step of “rotatably coupling a storage disk to a drive housing, the storage disk having a body region, a first side region that stores data and a second side region opposite the first side region, the body region being positioned between the side regions, the second side region having an exposed second side surface including an outer flat section and an outer ridged section that extends at least approximately 0.001 millimeters above the outer flat section.” This step is not taught or suggested by Boutaghou et al. Thus claim 156 should be allowed. Because claims 157-164 depend from claim 156, these claims should also be allowed.